

SPECIAL EDITION

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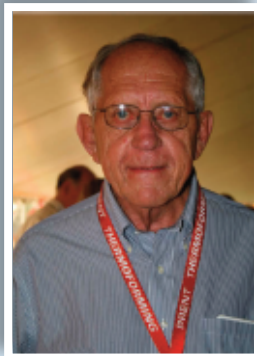
XXXXII • Issue No. 56, 2015

PRENT

**A LOOK Back
at the LEGACY
of a MODERN
Thermoforming
PIONEER**

JACK PREGONT

1929 – 2015



Prent Loses a Pioneer of Modern Thermoforming **JACK PREGONT**

An industry giant leaves a lifetime of achievements as his legacy.

In 1967 Jack Pregont founded Prent Corporation with the zeal an entrepreneur brings to the the table. It started with a big dream, a lot of moxie and the earnings from thermoforming cake decorations.

He located his young company in an old silo factory in his hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin. Today, that company is now the leading global manufacturer of thermoformed packaging for the medical, electronics and consumer products industries. It employs 2,000 people at nine facilities around the world, including Denmark, Malaysia, China, Singapore, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Arizona and Wisconsin.

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Jack's interest in plastics began when he started thermoforming cake decorations to use in his family's bakery business.

The Budding Entrepreneur

The son of a retail baker in Janesville, WI, Jack Pregont pointed to 1948 as the year his interest in plastics first began. A neighbor gave the teenage boy a stack of old *Popular Mechanics*. One magazine article in particular caught his attention: it was about how celluloid ping-pong balls were made.

“As far back as I can remember,” he said, “I was scrounging around for pieces of plastic to mold. My mother’s kitchen oven was my heat source and she complained about that for the rest of her life!”

Most of his early projects were bakery related, which evolved into a line of mail order cake decorating novelties.

Later, when he was developing a thermoformed plastic merry-go-round, the new owners of the Janesville Paper Box Company suggested he develop plastic packaging for them on a commission basis. In return he would be allowed to use their forming equipment to produce his merry-go-round. Within three years, the plastics department exceeded the box business.

Frustrated, however, by the lack of time to thermoform his projects, Jack left the company. But just as he was ready to strike out on his own, the Janesville-based Parker Pen Company asked Jack to join its executive training program.

He did, and never regretted the decision. “During my seven years with Parker Pen, I gained invaluable experience traveling and doing everything from sales promotion to working with Parker’s automation subsidiary,” he explained.



In 1989, Jack (right) was honored with the Thermoformer of the Year Award from the Society of Plastics Engineering.

“ The passing of my father is a sad loss for this company and my family. ”

Joseph T. Pregont,
Prent President and CEO



The mold for Jack's thermoformed merry-go-round cake decoration.

The Founding of Prent

Meanwhile, Jack continued to moonlight in the basement of his parent's bakery, thermoforming current fads for birthday cake decorations and selling plans for a simple thermoforming machine—through ads in *Popular Mechanics*. By 1966, the profits he earned selling Batman cake decorations allowed Jack to buy an old 10,000 sq. ft. silo factory. He acquired two beat up forming machines from the Rubber Maid Company junk pile, updated them to a competitive level and cleaned up the building. Finally in November 1967, Prent Corporation was open for business.



The profits Jack earned selling thermoformed Batman cake decorations allowed him to purchase his first building - an old silo factory.

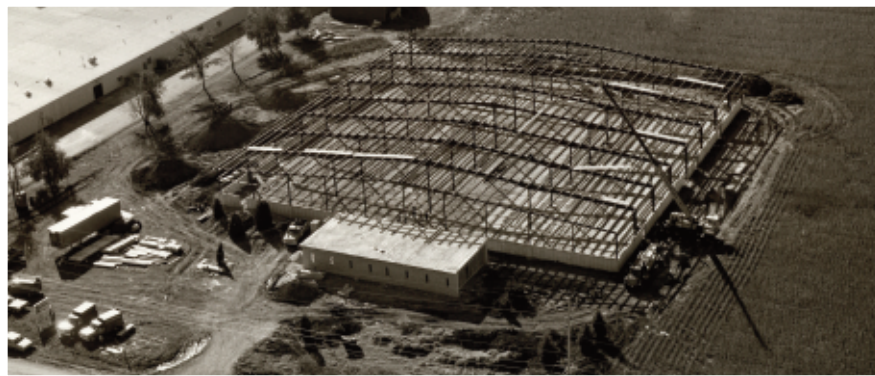
Success came quickly to Jack. After three years, Prent's employment doubled and Jack was able to establish model and tool departments.

After four years, Jack received his first packaging award, beginning a nearly 50 year track record of major packaging achievements for Prent, including 15 prestigious World Star Awards.



Prent's Harding Street location in 1970.

After just six years in business—with sales doubling every year and employment reaching 100—Jack was running out of room in his old silo factory. By 1974, he had constructed and moved into a new state-of-the-art thermoforming facility (pictured below).



In 1974, Jack began construction on a new building in Janesville, shown here. Since then it's been expanded many times and today is the World Headquarters of Prent Corporation.

THE NEXT GENERATION AND BEYOND

In 1985, Jack retired and his son Joseph T. Pregont became President. Today, Joe's children—Joseph II, Rachel and Michael—have all followed in their grandfather and father's footsteps and are actively involved in leading Prent and GOEX well into the future.



Joseph T. Pregont
Prent Corporation
President and CEO

Plastics Industry Recognition and Accomplishments

1980

Founder

SPI Thermoforming Institute

In 1980, Jack was one of the original seven founding members of the Thermoforming Institute of the Society of Plastic Industry (SPI) and served as the organization's first Chairman. He was active in the organization for many years.

1989

Thermoformer of the Year from SPE

In 1989, Jack was named "Thermoformer of the Year" by the Society of Plastic Engineers (SPE).

2007

Lifetime Achievement Award from SPE

In 2007, Jack was honored by The Thermoforming Division of SPE with its "Lifetime Achievement Award."

1971-Present

Innovations in Package Design

Thanks to Jack's leadership, Prent is renowned for its design, engineering and production excellence. Since 1971, Prent has garnered dozens of packaging awards, including 15 WorldStar packaging awards in the "medical or pharmaceutical packaging" category, more than any other company in the world. Prent counts among its customers nearly every major medical device manufacturer in the world.

THE TURNING POINTS

In 1997, Jack and Carol Pregont recalled some of the critical milestones that contributed to their company's rapid growth.



Jack and Carol Pregont join their son Joseph T. Pregont, Prent President and CEO, during the company's 40th Anniversary celebrations in 2007.

Early Employees Fondly Remember Jack Pregont

In Newsprint stories over the years, many longtime employees have recalled what it was like to work for Jack in the early days. Paraphrased here are just some of their memories.

Margie Enerson

When I started, the company was just four years old and there were only a small group of employees in the silo plant on Harding St. It's been like a family at Prent. On the line you share everything about your life. A lot of people became personal friends. Jack was in a uniform exactly like the rest of us setting up machines. Little Joe (now Prent's President & CEO) dumped the wastebaskets. Jack was always special—just one of the employees. He also understood families, mothers and children—and that's why so many women liked working here. When we moved to the new plant in 1974, it was so big! I remember we all did many different jobs throughout the day. If we finished an order, we might then run the grinding machine. We would change the scrap rolls ourselves. We didn't have a warehouse. We just went and hunted for the material and measured it ourselves. • Hired 1971



Ron Steurer

I started working at Prent's Harding Street location when the company was just five years old and I had no factory experience. The company had a core of six to eight full time employees. The very first day at Harding St., Jack Pregont—clad in a green uniform just like the other handful of line workers—showed me how to operate a piece of plastics production machinery. I was so impressed that I told myself I would give this guy all I had. Jack Pregont had a big impact on me and the other early employees. He was always on the floor spending a lot of one-on-one time with employees. He told you how things worked, but never talked down to you.

He made working at Prent a learning experience. You could ask him all the questions you wanted. He was an innate teacher—a boss who spent more time on the plant floor than in his office. He would come in on weekends to show people how to improve their work. He wanted to make sure workers in those early years fully understood the processes. I think Jack saw something special in his early workers. I know we all felt a lot of respect for him.

Jack's teaching and training gifts were key foundations for Prent's success. He grew his company using the people within. He helped everyone fit in. Today, Ron is Vice President of Manufacturing at Prent Janesville. • Hired 1972

Joyce Ythri

I remember Jack's children: Joe, Dan and Ann. He had them learning the business from the ground up starting with cleaning the building. I feel like we raised those kids! • Hired 1972



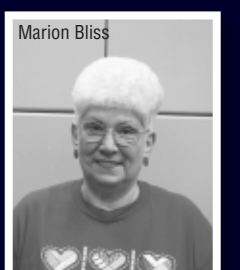
Pat Marko

Working for Jack was a wonderful experience. He was flexible and good with families. Why was Prent so successful over the years? It was Jack. What comes around—goes around. • Hired 1972



Marie Holmes and Marian Bliss

Both women appreciated the generous time off Jack gave early employees for family emergencies. When each experienced the tragic death of spouses and children, Jack told them to take off all the time they needed. Such empathy made employees very loyal, said Marie and Marian. • Hired 1974 and 1975 respectively



Jeff Golberg

I was impressed by how much Jack did for employees. Our retirement benefits were better than other companies and our leave time was accommodating. If there was a family problem, Jack gave us time off. But I was really impressed with his policy of hiring from within. It provided me with a way to move up the ladder. I started as an hourly person, but I wanted to be a salaried engineer. Jack gave me that chance. • Hired 1975



Frito Lay Sip 'n Dip trays are being made on the first new pressure forming machine Jack purchased from Brown Machine Co.

TURNING POINT #1 The First Pressure Forming Equipment

In 1969, I went to call on Gaylord Brown of the Brown Machine Co. in Michigan to purchase my first new thermoforming machine. He showed me a prototype machine he'd made for Dixie Cups. We both thought I could probably turn it into a production machine—and he sold it to me on credit, a nearly unheard of practice.

The first product we made on that machine was a Sip 'n Dip tray for Frito Lay. This provided us an opening product to show other customers.

Within two years we had built a new building to house four machines, and Prent became one of the pioneers of high speed pressure forming in the country. Between Brown and Prent we built a small industry out of high-speed thermoforming machines.



Here, four new Brown forming machines are being used by Prent employees in the early 1970's. Today, Prent no longer purchases formers. Rather, every thermoformer used in its nine facilities around the world are designed and built inside a massive Machine Build Facility on Prent's Janesville campus.

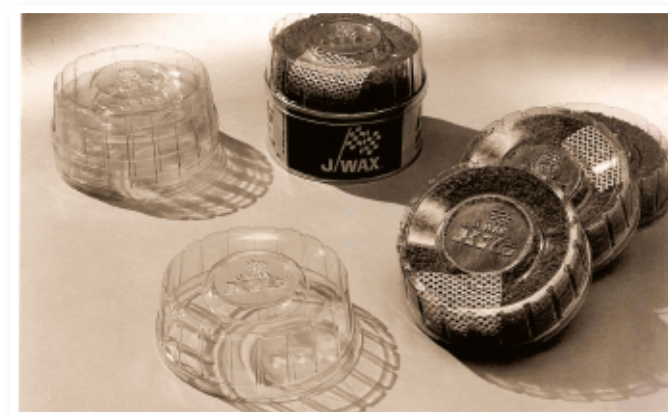
TURNING POINT #2 The Start of the Medical Business

My business plan was to develop a company that would produce prototype products for other companies to test market. After completion of the test market, we would install the whole manufacturing process into our customer's plant. We named it cooperative manufacturing.

The first company we called on with the idea was Abbot Laboratories. They thought it was a great concept, but asked us to apply that principle to the thermoforming industry because they needed both a process developed for sealing medical packages as well as a better thermoforming source. What evolved was the Prent medical business.

TURNING POINT #3 Word-of-Mouth Referrals

The growth of our medical business was responsible for our high quality standards, including the cleanliness of the plant and much of the high tech processes we employ today. Our reputation has been our best sales force. I attribute much of our early success to word-of-mouth referrals within the medical industry. We also learned early on, that we had to select our customers in much the same way that our customers carefully select their suppliers.



An accident at the supplier for Johnson Wax Kit covers lead to Prent Turning Point #4.

TURNING POINT #4 Wax Kit Covers

The real break came when Johnson Wax needed a wax kit cover—fast. Their injection molder had a disastrous accident and ruined the mold. The accident was about to put Johnson Wax out of business for the season.

They approached Prent looking for a temporary product until their big mold was fixed. With the help of Johnson's model shop and tool room, we began producing kit covers in just 2 1/2 weeks. We never stopped producing the product for the next 15 years.

TURNING POINT #5 Glade Air Fresheners

Our new plant on Kennedy Rd. in Janesville, opened the door for Johnson Wax to buy their first real cooperative manufacturing job from us. We would take the research from Johnson Wax and set-up a pilot manufacturing facility and produce products for their test market. When the product was successful, everything would go back to them.

They placed an order for 10,000 cases of Glade Air Fresheners for test market. But before we finished the 10,000 cases, their orders were coming in so fast there wasn't time for the conversion so they contracted with us for a million cases. Over the next eight years we made a half a billion Glade Air Fresheners.

Cooperative manufacturing with Johnson Wax allowed Prent the opportunity to teach ourselves many new technologies. For Glade we developed RF welding and PVC extrusion. Nobody else was doing it at the time. Many standards that still exist today evolved out of our work for Johnson Wax.



Jack holding Glade Air Freshener parts. Prent produced half a billion parts over eight years.

TURNING POINT #6 The Vistakon Contact Lens Package

Our most significant breakthrough came in the Vistakon Contact Lens package. They'd tried five other suppliers and each had failed because the package was made out of material that was considered very difficult to form. But our technology team developed a unique thermoforming process for them. Before the project was done, we'd made billions of Vistakon lens packages, running 24 hours a day in Janesville and Flagstaff.

EPILOGUE

Although Jack Pregont turned the management of his company over to his son Joseph in 1985, he and his wife Carol stayed active in Prent as members of the company's Board of Directors.

After nearly 50 years, the lofty standards by which Prent lives by today can still be attributed directly to the couple's hard work, uncompromising quality and intense focus on filling every customers' needs with innovation and speed.

But in the end, Jack is most proud of the people working at Prent—both those that are here today and those that have moved on. The company's tremendous growth was made possible only with the help and dedication of the extraordinary employees of Prent.



Success Through Vertical Integration

Many of Prent's business breakthroughs came from Jack's belief that true thermoforming excellence could only come from controlling the entire thermoforming process—including machines, material and manpower. This vertical integration led to the establishment of:



An early picture of part-time Mini-shift employees picking, inspecting and packing parts. Today, thermoforming is conducted inside modern clean rooms and employees are gowned to meet high medical packaging standards.

Part-time Mini-Shift Employment Model

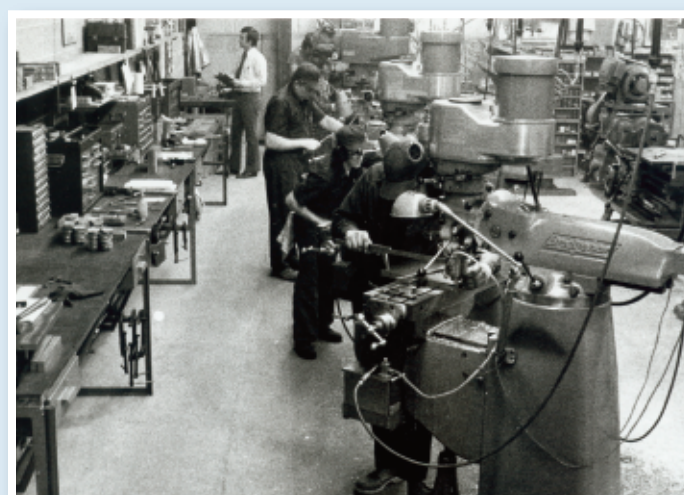
Jack developed the Mini-Shift employment concept to accommodate the part-time needs of prospective employees. This model has since been copied by many manufacturers and featured in business publications. Today, the Mini-Shift is still going strong and is a highly sought employment opportunity. Other innovative human resource policies cemented Jack's tight relationship with the employees who helped make his company such a success. Jack believed in paying fair wages, providing advancement opportunities, intensive training and generous benefits.

Product Development & Tooling Department

To fully meet the needs of his customers, Jack established complete in-house design and tooling capabilities soon after starting his company.

Plastics Extrusion

Not satisfied with the capabilities of commercially available plastic stock to perform to the demands of his complex designs, Jack started extruding his own plastic. Today, Prent's original Extrusion Department is a separate company (GOEX Corp) and one of the largest sheet and roll stocks manufacturers in North America.



Manual tooling equipment, such as these, have been replaced by high speed CNC machines. Today, Prent has the largest Tool Department in the industry.



PRENT CORPORATION

2225 Kennedy Rd.
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Visit our Home Page at www.prent.com to view an interesting Powerpoint produced in 2007 which highlights the early days of Prent Corporation.



Thermoforming Breakthroughs by Jack and Prent's Engineering Team

Early on, Jack focused on being the industry leader in deep draw thermoforming, one of the most technically difficult types of thermoforming. In his quest to create solutions for his customer's problems, Jack and his engineering team made many industry breakthroughs including:



Employees in the 1970's RF Seal Glade Air Freshners, a technique originated by Jack and Prent's engineering team.

NEW SEALING METHODS

- ◆ 1974: Developed RF Sealing: 2 rigid thermoforms bonded without adhesive by using high frequency voltage, heat, and pressure to join materials by electrical vibration of the molecules. (For Glade Air Freshener, SC Johnson).
- ◆ Flangeless RF welding.
- ◆ Multi-plane RF sealing.
- ◆ RF bar sealing and tear sealing in same operation.
- ◆ Perimeter bar sealing around a tube (inlet and drain tubes 3-D RF welded to a rigid thermoformed).
- ◆ Heat seal closure of thermoform fold-ups, rather than mechanical closures.
- ◆ Perimeter tear sealing with internal bar seals to create hinges.
- ◆ Tear seal and bar seal in one operation.

PACKAGING INNOVATIONS

- ◆ Prent patented the three-panel plastic fold-up Rack 'n Stand, which became a plastics packaging industry standard. Because of its significance to the industry, Jack did not enforce his patent. It was his contribution to the industry.
- ◆ Laser scoring developed.
- ◆ Created thermoformed plastic end caps in 1978, replacing EPS foam caps. The innovation was the cover story feature in a 1979 *Food & Drug Packaging* magazine.
- ◆ In 1979 the first RF Weld "Twinwall" package is made.
- ◆ Development of deep draw, fold-up plastic packaging.
- ◆ New process to both deep and shallow draw plastic adjacent to a hinge.
- ◆ A large variety of de-nesting methods for automated robotic processing.
- ◆ Snap buttons of varying plastic gauges to make a folded pack easily open by consumer, yet remain closed during shipment.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HINGES

- ◆ Fade-away hinge, allowing burr-free fold-up packaging for medical and consumer applications.
- ◆ Prent invents the dovetail living hinge in 1979.
- ◆ Hinged snap-on cover.
- ◆ Coined hinge.
- ◆ Twin wall box with bar seal over tear seal, allowing a hinged cover.